(a) whether Government has recently decided to take away the powers of the Prasar Bharati Board;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has received a spate of complaints about the functioning of the Prasar Bharati Board; and

(d) if so, the details and nature of the complaints and the action contemplated by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Government has received copies of representations and correspondences from members of the Prasar Bharati Board to the CEO and also the Chairman, Prasar Bharati Board regarding issues pertaining to the functioning of the Prasar Bharati Board. Government has ordered a special audit of Prasar Bharati on General Accounting Issues including the issue of functioning of Prasar Bharati and its Board and Specific Financial Issues as per the complaints of Member (Finance) Prasar Bharati.

The letters are in the nature of allegations regarding irresponsible behaviour of the Chairman, ECO and members of the Board, manner of fixing dates for the Board meetings, finalization and issue of minutes in departure from the past practices, financial irregularities, systemic problems etc. indicating disharmony among the Board members.

A Public Interest Litigation was filed by Center for Public Interest Litigation in the High Court of Delhi which included certain issues pertaining to functioning of the Board. The High Court vide its interim order dated 27/07/2009, has given directions on certain issues pertaining to the functioning of the Board such as the minutes of meetings of the Board dated 21.01.2009, 16.02.2009, 23.03.2009, 18.05.2009 and 25.06.2009 as authenticated by the Chairman has to be implemented, submissions of compliance report of the implementation of the Resolutions and the minutes book to the High Court and fixing the date of the Board meeting. It has also directed that the allegation regarding financial and administrative irregularities etc. are referred to the Central Vigilance Commission for appropriate investigation. The same has been referred to Central Vigilance Commission by Prasar Bharati. In its final orders dated 13/11/2009, the High Court dismissed the PIL while upholding the interim directions to refer allegations regarding financial and administrative irregularities to Central Vigilance Commission. In the meanwhile, an SLP has been filed in the Supreme Court by the CEO, Prasar Bharati against the interim order of the High Court. The matter is *sub-judice*.

Changes in Court Fee Act and Indian Stamp Act

1910. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Law Commission has recommended drastic changes in the archaic Court Fee Act and Indian Stamp Act to check the loss of Government's revenue by using alternative modes of payments like demand draft, pay order, banker's cheque, postal order, challan for court fee and stamp duty etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has accepted these recommendations of the Law Commission to save Government's huge cost of printing judicial and non-judicial stamps and commission of stamp vendors etc.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Appointment of Judges in Supreme Court

1911. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that names of some High Court Judges have been cleared by the Supreme Court collegium early in September, 2009 for appointment as a Supreme Court Judge;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has received complaints from eminent jurists and Lawyers' Association in Chennai levelling serious charges of corruption and disproportionate assets against a particular Chief Justice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Chief Justice of India had recommended names of five Chief Justices of the High Courts for appointment as Judges of the Supreme Court.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. A view on the allegations made against one of the Chief Justices is to be taken by the Chief Justice of India as per the existing procedure.

Vacant posts of Judges

1912. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:
SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the delay in filling up the vacancies of Judges in subordinate judiciary, High Courts and Supreme Court is the main reason for the accumulation of pending cases in the various court, in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the vacant posts of Judges in subordinate courts, High Courts and Supreme Court, at present; and

(c) the steps being taken to fill up these vacancies within a time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) It is a fact that delay in filling up the vacancies of Judges is one of the main reasons for accumulation of pending cases in courts.